

**State CIO
Agency IT Plans
2009 – 2011 Biennium**

State Board of Elections

**State CIO
Departmental/Agency IT Plans
2009-2011 Biennium**

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 4 |
| <i>Agency Background</i> | <i>4</i> |
| <i>Agency Functions.....</i> | <i>4</i> |
| Voter Administration | 4 |
| Voting Systems | 4 |
| Campaign Reporting | 4 |
| Information Systems | 4 |
| <i>Goals and Objectives</i> | <i>5</i> |
| <i>Governmental Mandates.....</i> | <i>5</i> |
| REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSITIONING EXISTING IT ACTIVITIES/RESOURCES | 6 |
| CURRENT PROJECTS | 6 |
| APPLICATIONS | 6 |
| <i>Campaign Finance.....</i> | <i>6</i> |
| Campaign Finance Organization/ Central..... | 6 |
| Campaign Finance Remote..... | 6 |
| <i>Candidate Filing / Election Setup</i> | <i>7</i> |
| <i>SEIMS</i> | <i>7</i> |
| INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS | 7 |
| <i>Hardware and System Software Updates</i> | <i>7</i> |
| <i>Centralization</i> | <i>7</i> |
| OPERATIONS/IT MANAGEMENT..... | 8 |
| HUMAN RESOURCES | 9 |
| IT SPECIFIC ECONOMIC-DRIVEN REQUIREMENTS OR OPPORTUNITIES | 10 |
| APPLICATION TECHNOLOGY | 10 |
| UPGRADE INFRASTRUCTURE - HARDWARE AND SYSTEM SOFTWARE UPDATES..... | 10 |
| CENTRALIZE ADDITIONAL FUNCTION | 10 |
| SCANNING OF ALL FORMS TO REDUCE DATA ENTRY | 10 |
| IT INITIATIVES DEVELOPED FROM AND ALIGNING WITH PLAN DRIVERS..... | 11 |
| INITIATIVE 1 – SCANNING OF ALL FORMS TO REDUCE DATA ENTRY | 11 |
| INITIATIVE 2 – NEW LEGISLATION UPDATES FOR ELECTIONS AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE | 11 |
| INITIATIVE 3 – ERAPP..... | 11 |
| INITIATIVE 4 – UPGRADE SOFTWARE AND DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENT TO CURRENT VERSION | 11 |
| INITIATIVE 5 – IMPLEMENT GIS AT STATE LEVEL TO ACCOMMODATE NEW LEGISLATION | 12 |

| | |
|--|----|
| INITIATIVE 6 – UPGRADE DATABASE INFRASTRUCTURE | 12 |
| INITIATIVE 7 – ON-LINE VOTER REGISTRATION | 12 |
| INITIATIVE 8 – ONE STOP VOTING EQUIPMENT UPGRADES..... | 12 |
| INITIATIVE 9 – MILITARY BALLOTS | 12 |
| INITIATIVE 10 – INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING..... | 12 |

Executive Summary

Agency Background

The State Board of Elections (SBE) is the state agency charged with overall responsibility for administration of the elections process and campaign finance disclosure in North Carolina. The agency's duties are to promote consistent administration and equal application of all elections and campaign finance laws, rules, and regulations. SBE strives to promote among the citizens of North Carolina confidence in the integrity of the free election process through the consistent administration and equal application of all election and campaign finance laws, rules, and regulations. SBE is supported by a 20 member professional technology staff overseeing day-to-day operations of the State Board office in Raleigh (administration, campaign reporting and voting systems).

Agency Functions

The State Board of Elections is responsible for administering the elections process and campaign finance disclosure in the State. The agency serves the public by supervising all primary and general elections held in the State. To this end, the State Board of Elections enforces election laws and promulgates reasonable rules and regulations governing the conduct of primaries and elections in the State. The office is comprised of four functional divisions:

Voter Administration

Including general supervision of 100 county boards of elections in administering elections and related laws, certifying election results, voter outreach, voter registration, absentee voting, education/training, investigations/audits, and legal matters. In addition, this division is responsible for implementing voting policies and procedures, and guidance of Election Day workers.

Voting Systems

Including general supervision of 100 county boards of elections in administering, certifying and maintaining voting systems. These systems include State Board of Elections certified voting equipment including voting systems software, tabulators, direct record voting equipment and election night reporting software.

Campaign Reporting

Including public education; ensure compliance of all political committees and other regulated entities with North Carolina campaign finance laws; assistance and training to candidates, political committee treasurers and county/municipal boards of elections and staff; investigating complaints, conducting research and preparing analyses in preparation for the State Board to hold evidentiary hearings, providing for electronic filing, and conducting training.

Information Systems

Including implementing and maintaining the statewide election information management system (SEIMS) and a campaign finance system. Maintaining these systems include a hardware infrastructure, software development, and support. Support includes providing assistance and training to County Board of Election officials and staff, campaign committees, and making statewide election data available to the public.

Goals and Objectives

- Ensure the integrity and consistency of all elections throughout the state.
- Improve efficiency of the agency.
- Provide the public access to accurate election information more efficiently using current technologies.

Governmental Mandates

Implement new state and federal mandates and legislation. New legislation is passed every session by the state legislature addressing both the Elections and Campaign finance areas. Processes and procedures must be put in place to facilitate the implementation of these changes.

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA, Pub.L. 107-252) mandates that all states and localities upgrade many aspects of their election procedures, including their voting machines, registration processes and poll worker training. States are mandated to implement voting facilities and voting equipment that is accessible to individuals with disabilities. In addition, HAVA requires states develop a single, uniform, official, centralized, interactive computerized statewide voter registration list defined, maintained, and administered at the State level. Furthermore, federal law requires the statewide list be coordinated with other agency databases within the state to 1) ensure data integrity of voter information and 2) expedite the administration process of voter registrations and other election processes. HAVA also requires regular maintenance of the statewide list including removing ineligible voters and duplicate names are eliminated in accordance with the NVRA.

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993, Public Law 103-31, also known as **The Motor Voter Act** requires state governments to make the voter registration process easier by providing uniform registration services through drivers' license registration centers, disability centers, schools, libraries, and mail-in registration. The Act also requires notification of all applicants of whether their voter registration applications were accepted or rejected. The Act requires States to keep voter registration lists accurate and current, such as identifying persons who have become ineligible due to having died or moved outside the jurisdiction. At the same time, the Act requires list maintenance programs to incorporate specific safeguards, e.g., that they be uniform, non-discriminatory, in compliance with the Voting Rights Act.

Requirements for Transitioning Existing IT Activities/Resources

Current projects

There are four active current projects.

1. The Verified Ballot transaction project is currently in the execution and build phase and will be completed before the 2008 General Election. This project will help to build voter confidence by ensuring voters receive the correct ballot.
2. The WBET, Web Based Election Tools, project has just been completed for the 2008 Election cycle and includes a suite of software tools including our redesigned website, election night reporting system, issue tracking, project management and other county election support.
3. The Campaign Finance project is currently in the design phase. The goal is to provide the state campaign finance software to all county election offices for candidate filing and auditing.
4. The SEIMS standardization project is currently in the implementation phase. This project will upgrade all needed components of the SEIMS suite of software to the same development version. In addition, the upgrade will include performance enhancements and utilize a common component infrastructure.

Applications

Campaign Finance

Campaign Finance Organization/ Central

The CFO application is an administrative tool used by the North Carolina State Board of Elections to define committee structures, describe their purpose, record their receipts and expenditures, and create statutorily required reports. CFRE (Campaign Finance Report Entry) application supports data entry and auditing of the reports for campaign finance. CFDRV (Campaign Finance Document Receipt Verification) application supports document imaging of reports and other documents submitted to the SBE.

Campaign Finance Remote

The application is a tool for defining committee structures, describing their purpose, recording their receipts and expenditures, creating required reports, and submitting this information to the State Board of Elections.

Candidate Filing / Election Setup

The Candidate Filing Application is a tool for managing a database of candidate filing information taken from standard applications submitted by candidates to the State and County Board of Elections. This information is used to generate several types of application forms and summary reports to the state. The software also allows for the preparation and setup of statewide elections.

SEIMS

The State Election Information Management System (SEIMS) is a suite of applications that automates voter registration and greatly standardizes the administration of voter records. SEIMS consists of two major parts. One is the set of functions used for local processing in the counties. These functions include registering voters, verifying addresses, recording voter's history, mailing absentee ballots, administering polling-places and other election related tasks. The second is support for statewide functions which are based on a central statewide database containing voter registration and voter history data from all of the counties in the state.

Infrastructure assets

SEIMS runs on servers in each of the 100 counties. The servers are provided and supported by the State Board of Elections IT Staff. There are also servers at the SBE site to support the state database, development and testing. All of the application software is developed and supported by the SBE staff.

Hardware and System Software Updates

The SEIMS hardware servers, server operating system and database server were all upgraded in 2007 and 2008.

SQL Server 2000 is the current database server level supported by the SBE. The server operating system is Windows 2003.

Centralization

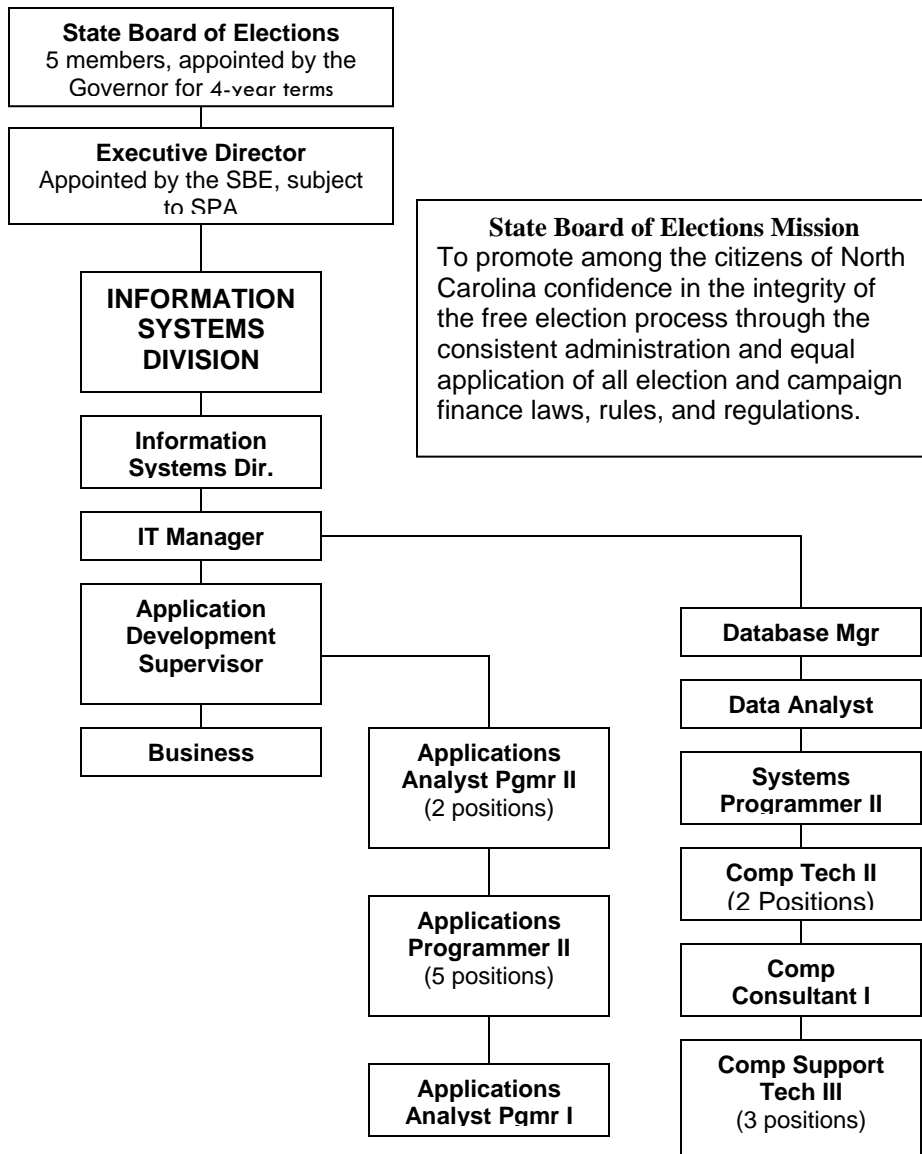
SEIMS is a client/server application that replicates data to the statewide voter registration database real time. Each of the 100 counties has a server and all software installed locally. This has many advantages however; the SBE experience in upgrading and supporting SEIMS over the past several years confirms that this approach should be migrated towards more centralized support and migrate from a decentralized to a more centralized approach over time.

Operations/IT management

The SBE is a small agency. For the most part planning and coordination can be handled very simply because of the small size. Complexity is added because of the support provided to the county boards of elections. The county boards are county personnel. IT support is provided mainly by the county; however the state must support the county voter registration and elections systems and software. Without major changes in the split reporting structure between the state and county any consolidation becomes very difficult.

Human resources

The IT staffing resource requirements are covered by the current staffing. The majority of the current staff is new to the agency and is gaining on the job experience with the business, infrastructure and applications. The current organization and staffing is shown below:



IT Specific Economic-Driven Requirements or Opportunities

Application Technology

The SBE application code is written in Visual Basic. Many of the applications are written in VB 6.0. VB.net is the latest technology supported by Microsoft. It is not cost effective to redo all applications in VB.Net. As new modules are developed or as significant changes are made to existing code the components are being migrated to VB.Net. The current SEIMS functions coded in VB.Net (Provisional Voting Support, Ballot Style Support and Petition Support). The rest of the modules will be upgraded and in production by 2010.

Upgrade Infrastructure - Hardware and System Software Updates

The SEIMS hardware servers, server operating system and database server were all upgraded in 2003 and 2004. To maintain support and reliability of the system these should be upgraded in 2007 and 2008. This initiative is in early stages of discussions. The upgrades should be containable with the continuation budget and federal grant funds.

Centralize Additional Function

These projects are all in the very early stages of discussions. Currently most functions and report generation executes at the county site. Many of the reporting capabilities can be provided centrally via the Web. Consideration is being given to converting several of the current reports to centralized web reports that can be accessed via the Web. This should reduce the support cost by allowing the SBE to update 1 copy of these reports rather than 100 as changes are required.

Scanning of all Forms to Reduce Data Entry

This is a project being discussed for 2009. This will allow for all forms to be scanned in and read with OCR/ICR. During the months close to the elections, the county boards of election offices are inundated with thousands of voter application forms. This initiative will help reduce the need for the hiring of personnel for data entry and will also help with the data accuracy.

IT Initiatives Developed From and Aligning With Plan Drivers

Initiative 1 – Scanning of all Forms to Reduce Data Entry

Implement document scanning of all forms. These forms will be scanned in and imported into the SEIMS and Campaign Finance systems using OCR/ICR systems. From January through August 2008, the county election boards have received over 500,000 new voter registration applications requiring scanning of the form, subsequent data entry and then review and verification of data. In addition our office receives thousands of reports, many containing over hundreds of pages of information, to be entered by our Campaign Finance division into the software. Since the state and county boards already have a scanning infrastructure, there will be a shorter return on investment.

Initiative 2 – New Legislation Updates for Elections and Campaign Finance

This past session several bills were passed and more will be passed by the end of 2011 that will require changes in the Campaign Finance and SEIMS Software. The legislation is currently being reviewed and will be implemented once approved by all stakeholders.

Initiative 3 – ERAPP

Implement an electronic version of the voter registration poll book that will allow voters to be checked in more efficiently and accurately than under the current paper based system. Electronic Records Access at the Polling Place (ERAPP) is a computer-based system that permits Election Officials to process voters at the polling place. The system will assist the election worker in capturing the voter information, identifying the voter eligibility, recording the voter's voting method, and producing the forms required for a voter to cast their vote legally. The ERAPP book will contain data on all voters within the entire jurisdiction, and eliminate the need for and expenses associated with the printed voter registration book. This will also electronically store voter history and updated voter personal information that can be uploaded to the voter registration system immediately, eliminating the cost and long hours required to manually input voter history information. Work on the project is targeted to start in early 2009 and the project is not to the point of plan initiation.

Initiative 4 – Upgrade Software and Development Environment to Current Version

The State Board of Elections has finished recent development and have migrated all legacy code to Visual Basic 6. At the moment about fifty percent of our code is in VB6 and the other half in VB .net. By 2010, all source code should be in the

same language and at the same development level. This will help streamline and simplify our development and test environment.

Initiative 5 – Implement GIS at State Level to Accommodate New Legislation

Implement and maintain a GIS system per GS 163-132.1B. In order to comply with NC statutes and report to the Census accurate voting tabulation districts, SBE is implementing a GIS system to capture, maintain, and deliver the necessary precinct and other jurisdictional data in the required formats needed by federal, state and county election agencies. Per GS 163-132.1B, the State Board of Elections must participate in the 2010 Census redistricting program. The state will receive the 2010 Census data by voting precinct and be able to revise districts at all levels.

Initiative 6 – Upgrade Database Infrastructure

Upgrade all database servers to MS Sql Server 2008 version. Currently all SBE database servers contain MS Sql Server 2000. There are significant performance enhancements, high availability features, column level encryption, and many other enhancements our agency requires.

Initiative 7 – On-Line Voter Registration

Implement the ability to register voters on-line. This will allow a more efficient and accurate means for citizens to register to vote or change their address. Currently voter registration, by paper, is a time consuming and costly process. The ability to register to vote on-line will eliminate the need for additional staff for data entry of people registering to vote. In addition, there is a significant amount of cost savings on the hundreds of thousands of printed voter registration forms that can be eliminated.

Initiative 8 – One Stop Voting Equipment Upgrades

Upgrade the One Stop Optical Scan Units to the newest release of Optical Scan Units that will include memory to handle all the ballot styles and precincts at a polling location. Currently counties are required to place multiple tabulation units in a One Stop location to handle the large number of ballot styles or precincts.

Initiative 9 – Military Ballots

Implement a secure on-line absentee voting method for Military and Overseas voters. Currently the only approved method other than regular mail is a FAX ballot. It is the goal to have Military/Overseas voters be able to cast ballots directly from a PC via the internet connection.

Initiative 10 – Instant Runoff Voting

The State Board of Elections will continue to test and improve methods of voting by Instant Runoff. Currently jurisdictions are required to conduct a second primary election when threshold values are not reached in a primary election.